

# ethical consumer



## Vegan Special Issue

**Product guides to:**

**Plant milk**

**Meat-free burgers and sausages**

**Beer**

Ten vegan  
brands owned  
by companies  
selling meat  
or dairy

Jane Turner  
Editor



Veganism is about more than eating a plant based diet. It's an ethos of compassion, which can extend into all aspects of a person's life.

Although not an explicitly vegan publication through our research Ethical Consumer has been committed to promoting the values of veganism for many years.

In each of our guides we rate and rank companies in four key areas: people, environment, politics and animals.

The animals category marks companies on a variety of criteria from animal testing policies, to the use of factory farming, many with the aim of promoting the abolition of animal exploitation.

## Increase in vegetarian and vegan diets

Since we first went to print 25 years ago we have seen a phenomenal growth in veganism particularly over recent years.

This year our markets report, which reports on the state of the ethical market, showed that there was a growth in vegetarian products category of 5.1% in 2016.

Our YouGov survey results indicate a bigger growth in ethically driven diets in the UK. This year's data showed a dramatic increase in the number of people changing their diet for ethical reasons.

Results of the question, "Which, if any, of the following have you done specifically for environmental/ animal welfare reasons in the last year?" were as follows:

	2017	2016	Increase
Avoided eating red meat	14%	9%	52%
Bought free range meat or eggs	52%	39%	32%
Tried to eat fish instead of meat	17%	13%	25%
Not eaten any meat (i.e. I am a vegetarian)	9%	7%	30%

If our survey data is representative for the whole of the UK it would mean that a staggering 4.6 million Brits are following a vegetarian diet. Although this figure is

significantly higher than the official NHS estimates (1.2 million in 2013), other polls have shown similar results with research group Mintel estimating that 12% of Brits were veggie back in 2014.

While our data is only for vegetarians and not specifically vegans it does show a hugely positive step in the right direction and many of the people surveyed will undoubtedly be vegan, not only this but it is only a small step for vegetarians to embrace a full vegan lifestyle.

## What is behind the brands

This huge change in eating habits is now reflected in the supermarkets shelves that are now stocked with a variety of plant based milks and alternatives to meat.

But how much do we know about these products and the companies that produce them?

This collection of guides (and the links to further guides) is aimed at supporting vegans and aspiring vegans in living as mindful a life as possible, helping them to make positive choices every time they are at the check out.

This handy download includes guides to plant milks, meat free sausages and burgers and beers – all the brands that are included in the guides and suitable for vegans are marked with [V] or [Vg] on the score tables.

We appreciate that living a vegan lifestyle can be challenging and we all recognize the need to compromise our ethics on occasions but we hope that this collection of guides will help to make your life a little easier when shopping for ethical vegan products and certainly leave you better informed.

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# Meat-free goes mainstream

*With veganism exploding in popularity around the world, Simon Birch talks to a couple of vegans about why they've given meat the shove and asks, why is veganism now so popular?*

**D**anielle Saunders is a revolutionary. The 27-year-old from Birmingham is just one of the many people from around the world who have turned their back on the meat and dairy industry and who are, instead, helping to turn the current surge in veganism into a global revolution.

The number of vegans here in the UK has increased by a whopping 360% in the past decade to over half a million. And with similar increases being recorded in many other countries, it's fair to say that after decades of being thought of as a fringe and freaky lifestyle, veganism is finally hitting the mainstream.

At the vanguard of this revolution are the younger generation, and Danielle's conversion to a meat-free life is typical of many young women: "I'd been working on a graduate training scheme for a national restaurant chain famous for its meat products and dishes. Consequently, I used to see the very worst of the meat industry and how disposable animals are."

Danielle's friends then showed her a couple of documentaries which highlighted negative environmental and ethical impacts of the meat industry. "It was like a switch being turned on as I hadn't considered the environmental impact of the meat industry whatsoever. Working for a company that actively encouraged people to consume more meat made me feel very guilty and very ignorant."

It was at this point that Danielle decided to stop supporting the meat industry by becoming a vegan. "Now that I'm no longer eating meat it's made me feel much happier that I'm no longer ignoring something that's cruel and horrible."

Danielle adds that: "Becoming a vegan has completely changed my life including my career path as I've found a new job with the Vegan Society. The whole process has been 100% positive."

It's been a similar path for 25-year-old Emilia from Manchester, who made the decision to go vegan after watching an online documentary about the meat industry.



Danielle enjoying a plate of vegan cauliflower wings.

"It instantly made me think about things in a completely different way and, together with my partner, we stopped eating meat and became vegan pretty much overnight," says Emilia. "What I find shocking is that when I was a meat-eater I was desensitised about where the chicken breast or steak came from. After you stop eating meat you suddenly realise that you're actually eating part of a dead animal."

## Social media drivers

But, given that it's been common knowledge for a long time that the meat and dairy industry has an appalling ethical, health and environmental impact, why are so many people suddenly turning vegan now, what's changed? "Social media has been at the centre of the vegan movement as it's highlighted how normal being a vegan really is and has helped to break down negative stereotypes," replies Danielle.

As well as helping vegans to network with each other and prevent them from feeling isolated, social media has been crucial in spreading information about vegan lifestyles in a way that was unimaginable up until only recently, with online vegan bloggers attracting a huge and growing following.

"In the past, the pamphlets and brochures we used would inform just a

small number of people compared with what can be done today with the internet and social media," adds Julian Lucas from Plamil, the world's first vegan company, which has played a crucial role in the

development of the vegan movement.

## Don't forget fossil fuels

And whilst this surge of support for veganism is welcome news, some, such as vegan and climate change activist Danny Chivers, argue that it's important to acknowledge that veganism alone won't save the world.

Writing in the New Internationalist Danny says: "If you want more people to understand that animal agriculture is a significant part of the climate change picture, bear in mind that there are lots of good reasons why many people are focusing on the fossil fuel industry, and it's not an either/or issue."

"Fossil fuels are the biggest cause of climate change, and the companies that profit from them wield huge political power. We need to find ways to support each other's causes and tackle all these problems together rather than fight over which one is more important."

Meanwhile, Danielle isn't surprised that veganism resonates so strongly with people in her generation: "As a whole I think our generation, the millennials, are tolerant and open-minded. We welcome diversity more than any previous generation," says Danielle. "We encourage and are often willing to fight for justice and understanding so it's only logical that veganism would speak to us."

# Vegan food brands linked to meat and dairy

*In January, to coincide with Veganuary, we took a look at some well-known vegan brands.*

Our research revealed that the UK's vegans may unwittingly be supporting companies that are also involved in the meat and dairy industries. Below is a list of vegan brands we have found to be owned by non-vegan companies:

Brands	Owners	Meat/Dairy Brands
Alpro, Provamel, Soya Soleil plant milks	Groupe Danone	Danone; Oykos; Activia; Cow & Gate; Aptamil; Actimel
Cauldron & Quorn	Monde Nissin	Dutchy Mill; Lucky Me
Linda McCartney, Dream plant milk	Hain Celestial	Ella's Kitchen; Freebird chicken
Pure spread	Kerry Foods	Wall's sausages; Richmond; Mattessons, Dairygold, Cheesestings
Swedish Glace soya ice cream	Unilever	Ben & Jerry's; Wall's ice cream; Knorr; Hellman's, Stork; Pot Noodle
Vitalite spread	Dairy Crest	Davidstow cheese; Cathedral City cheese; Clover; Utterly Butterly; Country Life; Willow

## Danone owns Alpro and Provamel brands

This contradiction is best exemplified by French multi-national Groupe Danone, a company with a 24.4% share in the global fresh dairy products market, who in 2016 completed the purchase of WhiteWave Foods, whose brands include Alpro, Provamel and Soya Soleil.

Alpro, which is by far the UK's best known vegan brand, are now part of a

brand roster that includes Activa yogurt, Cow & Gate baby milk and Actimel.

What's more Danone remain subject to multiple consumer boycotts over their aggressive marketing of their baby milk formula.

This £12.5billion takeover has left many consumers stunned and outraged, especially after Alpro tweeted this message (image left) endorsing dairy products soon after the takeover.

The online anger prompted vegan brand Oatly to release a cheeky response on social media:



Many vegans have been left questioning the ethical implications of one of the world's biggest dairy companies owning vegan brands. With Danone claiming it signifies a move towards sustainability, will consumers see through this greenwashing and realise these multinationals are simply trying to cash in on the global vegan boom?

## Other meat and dairy companies that own vegan brands

At Ethical Consumer, we have found other cases of this ethical conundrum for vegans. Take dairy free spreads such as Pure and Vitalite for example; Pure is owned by the Kerry Group, whose other well known brands include Richmond's sausages, Wall's Sausages, Dairygold and Cheesestings.

While Vitalite's owners Dairy Crest, produce a wide range of cheeses and butters, including Cathedral City, Clover and Utterly Butterly.

We also found links between the meat industry and cornerstone vegan brands such as Linda McCartney, whose public championing of the meat-free lifestyle has contributed significantly to the current boom in alternative diets.



The brand is currently owned by Hain Celestial, a company who sells poultry products in the US, as well as owning Ella's Kitchen baby food, much of which contains meat.

One of the world's largest multinationals, Unilever, also has a stake in the vegan market through their dairy-free soy ice cream brand Swedish Glace. However, the group continue to profit from the meat and dairy industries through their other brands, such as Hellman's, Ben & Jerry's and Knorr.

Although it may be well known that Quorn and Cauldron are not exclusively vegan brands, their growing number of vegan products warrants their inclusion. Their Philippine owners Monde Nissin's other brands include Dutch Mill yogurt and Lucky Me instant noodles (many containing meat).

## Vegan companies and their brands

You will be glad to hear that this is not the case for all vegan products. There are many listed in our plant milk and meat-free burgers and sausages guides that have no links to the dairy or meat industries. Such as:

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### Milk

Plamil, The Bridge, Good Hemp, Ecomil, Oatly, Sunrise, Isola Bio, Koko.

### Meat Substitutes

Dragonfly, Veggies, Taifun, Fry's, VegiDeli



### Dairy Free Ice Cream

The Booja-Booja Company  
The Coconut Collaborative

# Plant milks

*Anna Clayton explores the alternatives to dairy milk.*

Finding alternatives to animal milk has never been so easy. A wide range of plant milks are now available in both supermarkets and wholefood shops, with almond and coconut milk experiencing the biggest growth in popularity in 2016. Soya, almond, coconut, hazelnut, oat, cashew, rice, hemp, quinoa and various combinations are just some of the options you can now choose from. We list who makes what in the table on page 10.

## The ethics of milk

Plant derived milks may be an important vegan alternative to dairy milks but are they sustainable? This question is hard to answer as there is little reliable information on the environmental and social impacts different plant milks have compared to dairy, let alone a comparative study of the environmental and social impacts of different plant milks. We summarise the key ethical issues that have been raised for four widely available milks: soya, coconut, almond and rice.

## Soya

### The issues

Soya has faced criticism for many years over its role in deforesting the Amazon and converting more land for GM production globally. However, soya milk drinkers have never been the leading cause of these issues – most of the world's soya is fed to animals; only 6% of it is eaten or drunk directly by people.

As highlighted in our Soya article on page 17, if grown well, soya could be an environmentalist's best friend. It can produce more protein per land area than any other major crop. It is reported to use approximately 28% of the amount of water used for dairy production;<sup>4</sup> it can be grown on former pasture or abandoned land without cutting a single tree down; and it is nutritionally most similar to cows milk compared to other plant milk options.<sup>5</sup>

The key challenge is ensuring that soya is produced in a way that realises its environmental credentials.

### The Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) and ProTerra

We have, therefore, looked into the soya and GM policies of all plant milk brands to help highlight those using 'sustainable' soya. In doing so, two key schemes are often referred to: the Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) and ProTerra-certified.

Both schemes have faced criticism from campaign groups as they only demand that soya production meets basic environmental and labour standards, and neither address soya's indirect impacts (cattle ranchers selling their land to soya farmers and moving into virgin forest themselves, for example).

The key difference between the two schemes is that ProTerra ensures that no GM is used, and when you buy ProTerra certified soya, it is guaranteed to be the same soya that received the certification. In contrast, the RTRS does

not exclude GM soya<sup>6</sup> and allows some certification credits to be bought and sold separately from the soya that received the certification.

## Recommendations

Avoiding soya sourced from South America, and seeking out certified organic soya are the best options for ethically minded consumers. Of the Best Buys, Plamil and The Bridge both meet these standards. The organic soya milks offered by Sunrise and Sojade are also made from organic beans sourced outside of South America.

See page 10 for information on companies' soya sourcing policies.

## Coconut

### The issues

Coconuts are commonly grown without the use of pesticides, and can be sourced from existing coconut groves. However, as discussed previously in Ethical Consumer magazine (Issues 156 and 160), the rise in popularity of coconuts does not necessarily go hand-in-hand with improving wages and workers' rights. Increasing demand may lead to plantation expansion and the creation of new coconut groves – potentially at the detriment to pristine habitat.<sup>7</sup>

Nora Pittenger from Fair Trade USA names the following as the main ethical issues with coconut production currently:

- **Extreme Poverty:** coconut farmers are the poorest of the poor in countries like Indonesia and the Philippines, threatening the sustainability of coconut farming as a livelihood.
- **Unfavourable prices:** given that small plots of land are farmed, coconut farmers average about one dollar a day throughout the year.
- **Low yields and productivity:** particularly as coconut trees age, their inefficiency makes the cost of maintaining and harvesting coconuts high.
- **Mono-crop farming:** coconut is mainly grown as a mono-crop, fostering an environment of low crop diversity that can be detrimental to the environment and risky for farmers.

## Recommendations

Because of low wages in this sector, and considering there are currently no fairly traded coconut milks available, we would recommend avoiding coconut milks until

such an option is available.

A lack of fair trade coconut milks may be due to the market growing quickly, or the historical roots and focus of the fair trade movement on cocoa, coffee and tea. Either way, there is a clear need for pressure to be put on companies to ensure coconut producers are being paid a fair wage.

For more information on this issue see [fairtradeusa.org/blog/power-of-coconut](http://fairtradeusa.org/blog/power-of-coconut)

## Almond

### The issues

To make 4.5 litres of almond milk requires approximately 4,182 litres of water<sup>8</sup> – more than other plant milks. When this is placed in context of a rising demand for almond milk, and with more than 80% of the world's almonds coming from drought-stricken California, almond's ethical credentials become questionable. Over-pumping of aquifers to irrigate almond plantations is reported to have caused land subsidence in California, potentially threatening infrastructure such as roads, bridges etc.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, overworking honey bees in California's almond groves was highlighted in Markus Imhoof's film 'More Than Honey'.<sup>10</sup> Approximately 1.6 million beehives are said to be brought into California each year to support pollination, and as the area is "dripping with insecticides" a lot of bees have suffered.<sup>11</sup> Tom Philpott reports that "during the 2014 California almond bloom, between 15% and 25% of beehives suffered "severe" damage, ranging from complete hive collapse to dead and deformed brood."<sup>12</sup>

## Recommendations

For the reasons listed above, only organic almond milk should be sought and drunk in moderation.

The Bridge (a Best Buy), Rude Health and EcoMil offer organic almond milk. Dream also has an organic almond/hazelnut milk.

## Milk or M\*lk

Since 2010 the Food Standards Agency in the UK has had rules in place that state that only liquid from an animal can be called 'milk'.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, the term 'milk' is still often used interchangeably in marketing with some retailers having 'milk alternative' sections and price labels have been found to refer to milk even if packaging doesn't. Websites of both retailers and some manufacturers are reported to use the term 'milk' for both animal and plant varieties and the issue has been craftily avoided by using some of the following: m\*lk, mylk or even malk. Complaints from farmers and key dairy stakeholders such as The National Farmers Union<sup>2</sup> have resulted in an EU court reminder that only animal secretions can be referred to as milk.<sup>3</sup> It's now up to local authorities and trading standards to enforce this rule.

Watch this space.

## Rice

### The issues

It takes about 554.6 litres of water to grow the rice needed to make 4.5 litres of rice milk.<sup>13</sup> In addition, rice paddies globally are responsible for more than 1.2% of total global greenhouse gas emissions and at least 10% of agricultural emissions.<sup>14</sup> Ethical Consumer's guide to rice in Issue 160 advised reducing our intake of rice and replacing it with more local and lower-carbon staples.

## Recommendations

Because of the above issues, we advise avoiding rice milk.

## Which milk is best of them all?

As no independent academic studies have been conducted that directly compare the environmental and social impacts of all the different plant milks, including oat and hemp milk, it is hard to provide a clear answer to this question. Until such a study arises, responding to the issues raised by campaign groups seems the best way forward. Going with the recommendations above and looking for other organic milks is one way to navigate the ethical issues.

For example, The Bridge (Best Buy) offers a range of organic milks, including oat, quinoa, buckwheat, spelt and kamut.

To find out who sells what milk see the table on page 10.

### USING THE TABLES

Ethicscore: the higher the score, the better the company across the criticism categories.

● = worst rating,  
○ = middle rating,  
empty = best rating  
(no criticisms).

### USING THE TABLES

Positive ratings (+ve):

• Company Ethos:

★ = full mark,

☆ = half mark.

• Product Sustainability:  
Maximum of five positive marks.

BRAND	Ethicscore (out of 20)	Environmental Reporting	Climate Change	Pollution & Toxics	Habitats & Resources	Palm Oil	Animal Testing	Factory Farming	Animal Rights	Human Rights	Workers' Rights	Supply Chain Management	Irresponsible Marketing	Arms & Military Supply	Controversial Technologies	Boycott Call	Political Activity	Anti-Social Finance	Company Ethos	Product Sustainability	COMPANY GROUP
Plamil [O][Vg]	16.5																		★	1.5	Plamil Foods Ltd
The Bridge [O][Vg]	16.5																		★	1.5	The Bridge SRL
Good Hemp [Vg]	16																		★	1	Braham & Murray
EcoMil [O][Vg]	15	●										○							★	1.5	Nutriops SL
Oatly [O][Vg]	15	●										●							★	2	Cereal Base Ceba AB
Sunrise [O][Vg]	14.5											●								1.5	Tribeca May Ltd
Oatly [Vg]	14	●										●							★	1	Cereal Base Ceba AB
Rude Health [O]	13.5											●								0.5	Rude Health Foods Ltd
Sunrise [Vg]	13.5											●								0.5	Tribeca May Ltd
Granovita [O]	13	●										●								1	Dr A. Stoffel Holding AG
Isola Bio [O][Vg]	13	●										○								1.5	Royal Wessanen
Rude Health	13											●									Rude Health Foods Ltd
Koko [Vg]	12	●				●						●								1	First Grade Int./The Sambu Grp
Sojade [O]	10.5	●						●	●			●			○					1	Triballat Noyal
Sojasun	9.5	●						●	●			●			○						Triballat Noyal
Rice Dream [O][Vg]	8	●		○		○		●	●	○	○	●					○	●		1.5	Hain Celestial Group Inc
Dream [Vg]	7	●		○		○		●	●	○	○	●					○	●		0.5	Hain Celestial Group Inc
Co-op [O]	6		○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●		●		○		●	○	☆	1	Co-operative Group
Alpro [O][Vg]	5	●	○	○			●	●	●	●	○	●	●		○		●	●		2	Groupe Danone
Co-op	5		○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●		●		○		●	○	☆		Co-operative Group
Marks & Spencer	5		○	●	○		○	●	●	●	●		○		○		○	●			Marks & Spencer Group
Provamel [O][Vg]	5	●	○	○			●	●	●	●	○	●	●		○		●	●		2	Groupe Danone
Waitrose	5	○	○	●	●		○	●	●	●	●		●		○			○	☆		John Lewis Partnership Trust Ltd
Aldi Actileaf	4.5		○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	○		○						Aldi Sud/Carolus Stiftung
Alpro [Vg]	4	●	○	○			●	●	●	●	○	●	●		○		●	●		1	Groupe Danone
Holland & Barrett [O][Vg]	4	●	●	●		●	●	●	○	●		●		○			●	●		1	Carlyle Group
Morrisons [O]	3.5	○	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	●		○	○		○		1	Wm Morrison Supermarkets Plc
Soya Soleil [Vg]	3.5	●	○	○			●	●	●	●	○	●	●		○		●	●		0.5	Groupe Danone
Morrisons	2.5	○	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	●		○	○		○			Wm Morrison Supermarkets Plc
Sainsbury's	2.5	○	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	●		●		○	○			J Sainsbury
Tesco [O]	2.5	○	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●		●		●		●	●		1	Tesco plc
Tesco	1.5	○	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●		●		●		●	●			Tesco plc
Asda [O]	0.5	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●		●	●		1	Wal-Mart Stores Inc
Asda	0	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●		●	●			Wal-Mart Stores Inc

[Vg] = Marketed as vegan or certified by Vegan Society. [O] = Organic.

See all the research behind these ratings on [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org). For definitions of all the categories go to [www.ethicalconsumer.org/subscriberarea](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/subscriberarea)

## Table highlights

Large companies such as the supermarkets, Holland & Barrett and Group Danone are found at the bottom of the Plant Milk score table. All offer a range of uncertified animal products alongside their vegan milk ranges, resulting in them losing full marks under the Animal Rights and Factory Farming categories.

The smaller vegan and vegetarian companies float to the top of the Plant Milk ratings, with Plamil Foods and The Bridge coming out top. Buying vegan milk from these vegan companies is advised if Animal Rights are driving your purchasing choices.

## The companies behind the brands

**Danone** completed its acquisition of WhiteWave, the owner of the Alpro brand, earlier this year. In doing so, Alpro is now owned by a company that is the focus of a campaign run by Baby Milk Action (BMA) – the DanoNO campaign. BMA claims that “Danone is stepping up its targeting of health workers and the public around the world, in violation of international baby milk marketing standards”. It is calling on campaigners to expose Danone’s controversial practices.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding Animal Rights, Danone scores a worst under all relevant Ethical Consumer categories. For example, it conducts tests on animals “in order to ensure the safety and efficacy of new products” and does not provide a cut-off date for ending all animal testing.

**Koko Dairy Free** is a family owned company that has farmed coconuts in Eastern Sumatra, Indonesia, since 1986. The brand is owned by First Grade International – a supplier of coconut products who launched Koko Dairy Free in the UK in 2010. The company scores a worst rating under Environmental Reporting, Supply Chain Management and Palm Oil as it provides very little publicly available information about its policies and practices in these areas.

**Triballat Noyal** is also a family owned company that has been operating in France since the 1950s. It owns the Sojade and Sojasun brands in addition to selling a range of dairy products which include cheese and butter. The company shows a preference for organic and local sourcing, stating: “out of 100 kg of ingredients purchased, over 90 kg are

‘Made in France’ and, as of 2013, 43% of the company’s products were from organic farms.”

**Hain Celestial’s** brands include beauty and body care brands Jasons ‘natural’ products, Alva Botanica and Avalon Organics; and Hain Pure Protein which offers “Natural, Antibiotic Free, Vegetarian Fed, Humanely Raised poultry products.” In 2015, Hain Celestial agreed a \$7.5 million settlement in order to end a consumer fraud class action lawsuit over allegations that it had falsely labelled products as organic.<sup>20</sup>

All of **Oatly’s** milks are vegan and meet The Vegan Society and Animal Rights Sweden standards. In 2014, Oatly was taken to court by Sweden’s dairy lobby over its marketing slogans: “It’s like milk but made for humans” and “No milk. No soy. No badness.” The suit also objected to the lines “We are the post milk generation” and “Wow No Cow” claiming that they make milk appear to be “unfit for human consumption” and “unmodern”. Although Oatly ended up losing the lawsuit,<sup>21</sup> media coverage around the case ended up increasing Oatly’s sales.<sup>22</sup>

**Royal Wessanen** is a Netherlands-based organic foods company that owns the Isola Bio brand as well as Clipper Teas, Whole Earth and Kallo. All of the company’s soy comes from Italy. The company receives a worst rating for Environmental Reporting despite being conscious of its key environmental impacts as it does not publish two quantified targets for reducing these.

**Good Hemp**, as its name suggests, makes a range of products from hemp. To make these products, the company mainly uses hemp seed grown in Canada as it currently cannot grow enough in the UK to keep up with the growth of the business. All of its products are GM free



Best Buy brands for plant milks are: **Plamil**, **The Bridge** and **Good Hemp** as they all receive our best rating for Environmental Reporting and Supply Chain Management and are vegan companies offering vegan products.



and it’s an accredited supplier in the Non-GMO Project.

**Rude Health’s** priorities include: sourcing organic ingredients; using as few and ‘whole’ ingredients as possible and sourcing as locally as possible – from the UK and Europe. The company does not appear to use any soya or palm oil in its products.

IT'S LIKE  
MILK, BUT  
MADE FOR  
HUMANS.

Sweden’s dairy lobby objected to this Oatly marketing slogan claiming that it made milk appear to be “unfit for human consumption”.



## Who sells what

Brand	Milk offered	Soya sourcing and GM policies
Plamil	Organic soya milk.	Plamil only uses organic soya beans certified by Ecocert.
The Bridge	Organic: rice, soya, oat, almond, quinoa, buckwheat, spelt, kamut.	All the Bridge's products are certified organic and exclude the use of GM ingredients. Its soya is said to be sourced from Italy.
Good Hemp	Hemp milk.	No soya used.
EcoMil	Organic: almond, coconut, hazelnut, hemp, quinoa, sesame.	Nutriops sells a soya powder. "Soy used by Nutriops comes from organic farming ... The percentage of soy from organic farming is about 50%." Soy used in the conventional line was said not to contain GMOs. A traceability system, covering the company's whole supply chain, was used to ensure this.
Oatly	Organic and non-organic oat milk.	No soya used.
Sunrise	Organic and non-organic soya milk.	Only uses European-sourced organic GMO-free soya beans.
Isola Bio	Organic: Soya, millet, buckwheat, rice-hazelnut, rice-almond, rice-coconut, quinoa.	"Wessanen brand products do not contain any GMOs, GMO ingredients or ingredients derived from GMOs."
Rude Health	Organic: almond, cashew nut, hazelnut, brown rice, oat. Non-organic coconut milk.	No soya used.
Granovita	Organic soya milk.	Granovita uses organic soya beans which exclude the use of GMOs.
Koko	Coconut milk.	No soya used.
Triballat Noyal (Soyade and Sojasun)	Sojasun soya milk. Soyade organic: soya, rice, hemp.	Sources non-GMO soya from France and its entire supply chain is certified by an independent certification body.
Dream, Rice Dream	Rice, almond, oat, coconut, spelt, cashew/rice, almond/rice. Organic: rice, almond/hazelnut.	No soya milk products are offered by DREAM. Regarding GMOs: "99% of Hain Celestial food products are made from non-GMO ingredients".
Group Danone (Alpro, Provamel, Soya Soleil)	Alpro: almond, soya, organic soya, hazelnut, coconut, rice, oat, cashew, coconut/almond. Provamel: soya, almond, almond/rice, cashew, hazelnut, macadamia, coconut/almond, coconut/rice, rice, oat. Soya Soleil: soya milk.	Alpro sources its soya beans mainly from France. It does not use GMOs and uses a traceability system to ensure this – a system approved and monitored by independent auditors Cert ID. Danone has "adopted the global position of not using ingredients from genetically modified plants in its products ... These measures are not applied in countries such as the USA, where public concern on the subject remains limited and large-scale agricultural production of GM crops makes it difficult to obtain supplies of conventional products."
Waitrose	Soya.	Soya beans used in Waitrose's own label soya drinks are ProTerra-Certified. Waitrose is a member of the Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) and is a supporter of the Soy Moratorium, an initiative that has successfully reduced deforestation rates in the Amazon Biome. Waitrose is committed "to ensuring all soya used as food ingredients and in the feed used by our farmers for Waitrose meat, milk, poultry, egg and farmed fish products is procured through Certified sustainable sources, including sources certified under schemes operated by the Danube Soy Association, RTRS and the ProTerra Foundation by 2020." It was considered a 'leader' in WWF's soy scorecard, <sup>15</sup> scoring 18.5/ 24.
Aldi	Soya, almond.	No soya sourcing policy could be found. Regarding GM, Aldi states: "GM ingredients and derivatives are not permitted in our own label products ... In line with EU regulations and the UK market, our policy does not prohibit the use of GM ingredients in animal feed."
Holland & Barrett	Organic soya milk.	Holland & Barrett's website states that all its products are free from GMOs. No further information was found.
Morrisons	Organic and non-organic soya milk.	Although Morrisons is a member of the RTRS, it scores poorly (4.5/24) in WWF's 2016 soy scorecard, only sourcing 7% of its soy responsibly. Regarding GM it states that it does not use GMOs in any of its own brand products. However, it cannot guarantee that GM animal feed is not used in the supply chain for meat and dairy products, unless it's organic.

Brand	Milk offered	Soya sourcing and GM policies
Sainsbury's	Soya, almond, coconut.	Sainsbury's is a member of the RTRS and the Soy Moratorium and is "committed to sourcing the soya in its own-brand products sustainably by the end of 2020." According to WWF's 2016 scorecard, 0% of Sainsbury's soya was sourced responsibly. Regarding GM, Sainsbury's does "not permit the sale of own-brand food, drink, pet food, dietary supplements or floral products that contain GM material." Its non-organic range of meat and dairy was likely to be raised using GM animal feed.
Tesco	Organic and non-organic soya milk.	Tesco is a member of the RTRS and the Soy Moratorium and is "committed to ensuring all our soy is responsibly sourced by 2020" and to helping achieve zero net deforestation by 2020. It states: "In our own supply chain in the UK, soy used as an ingredient in our own-brand products come only from non-genetically modified (GM) sources. Our internal systems track all soy-related ingredients to ensure they come from a non-GM source." According to WWF's soy scorecard only 3% of Tesco's soya was responsibly sourced. Tesco does not prohibit the use of GM feed in the production of its non-organic meat, eggs and milk.
Asda	Organic and non-organic soya milk.	Asda is a member of the RTRS and the Soy Moratorium and commits to helping achieve zero net deforestation by 2020. It has calculated its soya footprint and states that its "2015 data shows that the vast majority of soya was sourced from countries other than Brazil and hence has no impact on the Brazilian Amazon and of the soya coming from Brazil 75% of that is certified." <sup>16</sup> According to WWF's 2016 soy scorecard it only sourced 11% of its soya responsibly. (No GMO policy was found).
Co-op	Organic and non-organic soya milk.	The Co-operative Food is a member of the RTRS but has a long way to go with sourcing soy sustainably (it scored 6.5/24 on WWF's soy scorecard). The Co-op does "not allow or sell any Co-op branded GM products or ingredients." However it "can't guarantee that there is no GM soya in [its] animal feed because GM soya used for animal feed is grown and imported alongside non-GM soya."
Marks & Spencer	Soya, oat, rice, coconut, multigrain milk.	M&S is a member of the Retail Soy Group and aims for "all soy used in ... products [to be] sourced from locations that don't contribute to deforestation" by 2020. It scored 18.5/24 on WWF's soy scorecard, and was considered 'well on the path' to sourcing sustainable soy. <sup>17</sup> Regarding GM: "M&S Food is not made with genetically modified ingredients nor the use of nanotechnology." However, "due to a lack of non-GM animal feed available to UK farmers, we, alongside other retailers, do not stipulate the use of non-GM animal feed in our fresh meat supply chain."



## Making your own

As many plant milk drinkers will be aware, Tetra Paks are the most common form of packaging for dairy milk alternatives. Although recyclable, the materials needed to make Tetra Paks' layered structure paperboard (made from wood), polyethylene (a type of plastic) and aluminium – could be considered a waste of resources.

One way to reduce Tetra Pak usage is to make your own milk and store it in a reusable glass bottle. We therefore asked for your advice and experience of making your own plant milks. We list some responses below.

### Caroline Whelpton

"I no longer buy commercially produced plant milks. I make my own oat milk which is creamy and goes very well in hot drinks as well as breakfast cereals. Here is the recipe. It is very easy:

- Soak one cup of oats in water for at least 15 mins or overnight.
- Drain water.
- Blend oats in blender with 3 cups water, a pinch of salt and a little vanilla essence.
- If you want a sweetened version, add a couple of dates.
- Strain through a sieve (a normal sieve used for baking is fine).

And that's it! The remaining oats can be used in pancakes, porridge, smoothies etc. So nothing is wasted. I have reduced packaging by doing this. I buy the oats in bulk and store them in a large container. I keep the finished oat milk in my fridge in a glass milk bottle-style screw top jar."

### Vic from London

"I started to adopt a zero-waste lifestyle in March this year, so purchasing tetra-packed soya milk had to stop.

I didn't want to go down the route of the 'ultra-homemaker' and so didn't even consider making my own soymilk as it's quite labour intensive, but instead have

Caroline's home made oat milk.



switched to homemade cashew milk.

I choose cashews over other nuts mostly due to price, but also hazels and almonds have a more distinctive flavour and are not really what I want in a cup of tea ...!

I buy cashews unpackaged – there are three semi-local shops close to me where I can buy them loose by weight. Depending on the price, I switch between organic and non-organic.

I've followed the simple recipe I found online which makes 700 ml milk (enough to store in an old gin bottle in the fridge door): 3/4 cup cashews and just under 3 cups of water. Sometimes I add some salt but it doesn't make much of a difference to the end taste.

Best tip I can offer – don't soak the cashews too long: they pulverise into creamy milk with minimal residue after straining if you soak for between 3-4 hours – overnight soaking yields a granier result with more large bits in the residue. Less is more when it comes to soaking – beans too!

I strain through a nylon nut milk bag which I think will last forever."

### Gillian Hall

"I've been making my own for a few years now using a Chufa milk maker. It's a lot less hassle than making and straining through a paint straining bag which I used to do.

For nut milks the price difference is more or less nothing in comparison to buying Tetra Paks but obviously you have the pulp left over to use. For cheaper ingredients like oats or rice the milk costs more or less nothing and the costs of the Chufa milk maker is quickly recouped.

We're a family of six vegans so we can get through a reasonable amount of plant milk so it's not 100% of our milk consumption but it has certainly significantly reduced the amount of Tetra Paks that we get through."

Note: homemade plant milks do not contain added vitamins like commercially produced ones. So you will need to ensure you are getting those vitamins from other sources – including a balanced and healthy diet.



**References:** 1 <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/shortcuts/2017/jul/23/dairy-milk-court-animal-plant-nut> 2 <https://www.plantbasednews.org/post/plant-milk-should-not-be-called-milk-say-dairy-industry-players> 3 [www.fwi.co.uk/news/non-dairy-products-in-europe-banned-using-from-using-word-milk.htm](http://www.fwi.co.uk/news/non-dairy-products-in-europe-banned-using-from-using-word-milk.htm) 4 [www.thecultureist.com/2016/10/05/why-dairy-alternatives-arent-always-good-for-you-or-the-planet](http://www.thecultureist.com/2016/10/05/why-dairy-alternatives-arent-always-good-for-you-or-the-planet) 5 [www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nutritional-value-of-plant-based-milk-alternatives-soya-hemp-oat-almond-coconut\\_uk\\_58ee2724e4b0ca64d91ad750](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nutritional-value-of-plant-based-milk-alternatives-soya-hemp-oat-almond-coconut_uk_58ee2724e4b0ca64d91ad750) 6 [www.responsiblesoy.org/contact-us/questions-and-answers/?lang=en](http://www.responsiblesoy.org/contact-us/questions-and-answers/?lang=en) 7 <http://fairtradeusa.org/blog/power-of-coconut> 8 [www.motherjones.com/environment/2014/02/wheres-californias-water-going/a](http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2014/02/wheres-californias-water-going/a) 9 [www.motherjones.com/food/2014/07/your-almond-habit-sucking-california-dry](http://www.motherjones.com/food/2014/07/your-almond-habit-sucking-california-dry) 10 [www.morethanahoneyfilm.com](http://www.morethanahoneyfilm.com) 11 [www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/shortcuts/2015/oct/21/almond-milk-quite-good-for-you-very-bad-for-the-planet](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/shortcuts/2015/oct/21/almond-milk-quite-good-for-you-very-bad-for-the-planet) 12 [www.motherjones.com/food/2015/05/almonds-now-require-85-percent-us-beehives](http://www.motherjones.com/food/2015/05/almonds-now-require-85-percent-us-beehives) 13 <https://www.thecultureist.com/2016/10/05/why-dairy-alternatives-arent-always-good-for-you-or-the-planet> 14 [www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/216137/icode](http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/216137/icode) 15 <http://soyscorecard.panda.org/check-the-scores/filter/country/uk> 16 <https://sustainability.asda.com/soya> 17 <http://soyscorecard.panda.org/check-the-scores/retail-and-food-services-companies/marks-and-spencer> 18 [www.babymilkaction.org/danono](http://www.babymilkaction.org/danono) 19 [www.foodchainmagazine.com/2017/08/07/first-grade-international-ltd](http://www.foodchainmagazine.com/2017/08/07/first-grade-international-ltd) 20 <https://www.bigclassaction.com/settlement/9-4m-settlement-reached-in-hain-organic-consumer.php> 21 <https://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/search/publication/8872536> 22 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-05-14/swedish-oat-milk-producer-benefits-from-dairy-industry-lawsuit>



# Vegging out with a burger

*Josie Wexler looks at the ethics of veggie burgers and sausages.*

In this guide, we've covered ready-made vegetarian burgers and sausages that contain mycoprotein (definition below), soya, or other beans, and nuts. These are foods that might be considered alternatives to meat in that they are a source of protein. We haven't covered the ones that are just vegetables in breadcrumbs, or dry packet mixes like Sosmix, although the companies in this guide may also make these and other meat-free products.

## The ingredients

Quorn is the leading brand in the meat alternatives market in Britain. It is made of mycoprotein, which means protein from fungi (in this case based on a type of soil mould), grown in fermentation vats. Although the name 'Quorn' is trademarked, the patent on the

mycoprotein itself expired a few years ago, so other companies can now make it under a different name if they wish. So far no one has wanted to.

As vegans will no doubt be aware, not all Quorn is vegan because egg white is used to bind the mycoprotein together. However, two vegan versions are now on sale in the UK, which use potato starch instead – frozen hot & spicy burgers and chicken style pieces.

In terms of ingredients across all brands, however, soya is still the number one choice. It is appealing because, unlike most other beans, it provides complete protein, containing all eight essential amino acids that we need. It has been eaten in Asia for thousands of years and was introduced to the rest of the world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it didn't catch on as a human food outside of Asia until much later.

Strangely, none of the main types of meat alternatives were created for animal welfare reasons. Soya sausages were invented in Germany during the first world war as a way of dealing with meat shortages. Quorn was developed in

the 1960s as part of a research drive to find new proteins, due to concerns about feeding the growing world population.

## The veggie sausages of the future

Some people are experimenting with making meat alternatives out of lupin beans, sometimes called "the soya bean of the north". They are also very high in protein, and they can grow in cooler climates than soya, which makes them better suited to Europe. Their aficionados claim that they are nutritionally and environmentally superior. At the moment lupin burgers are extremely niche and not included on the table, but can be bought online in places like [boutique-vegan.com](http://boutique-vegan.com).



Lupin beans.



# Veggie vs meat

## comparing climate and land impacts

The greenhouse gas emissions of food products is a big deal – agriculture accounts for about a third of world greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>1</sup>

As a rule of thumb, the production of meat from plants is inherently inefficient. Each time you go up a level in the food chain you lose energy. For example, in the case of beef, which is substantially grass-fed, about 50g of soya goes into creating a 100g beef burger.<sup>2</sup>

Red meat is also plagued by other climate issues, as it is the source of so much methane and nitrous oxide, both far stronger greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide.

(Please note, it is only animals that eat grass or other cellulose-based food that produce significant amounts of methane in their flatulence and burps. Human flatulence is nearly all nitrogen).

However, exactly how bad you think meat is for the climate depends on many things, not only how it is produced, but how you divide up responsibility for things like deforestation.

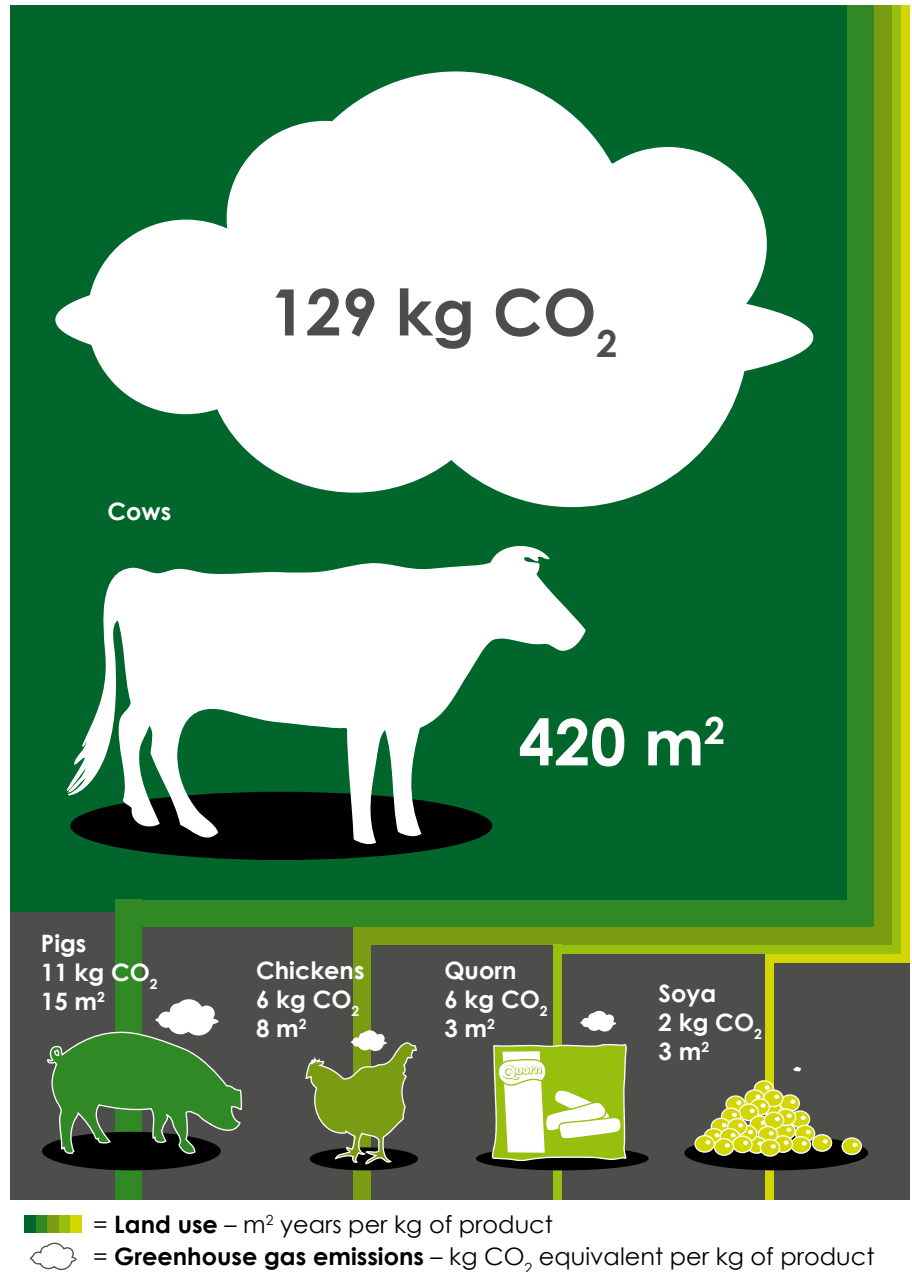
It is hard to find figures specifically on veggie burgers, but the relative figures for meat, Quorn and soya-based meat substitutes in general are given in the graphic opposite.<sup>3</sup>

Although there are wide ranges in the figures (ranges shown under the graphic), for simplicity the graphic only shows the upper limits. The overall picture that emerges, unsurprisingly, is that veggie is generally better, and red meat is the super villain.

Out of the veggie options, soya generally seems to beat Quorn on greenhouse gas emissions. Quorn is the winner on land use though, which is to be expected given that it is not an agricultural product but is largely made from an industrial process (fermentation).

Yet as stated above, all of these figures are apt to change enormously depending on how things are produced and, if grown badly, soya may start to look a lot less virtuous compared to Quorn. One calculation suggested that the greenhouse gas impact of soya beans could vary from 0.1 kg CO<sub>2</sub>eq/kg if it was produced sustainably, to 16.5 kg CO<sub>2</sub>eq/kg, if it was produced on deforested land in the Amazon.<sup>4</sup>

### Greenhouse gas and land use impacts (upper limits)



Figures show the upper limits. Ranges are: **Beef** 9-129 CO<sub>2</sub> and 7-420 m<sup>2</sup> land; **Pork** 4-11 CO<sub>2</sub> and 8-15 m<sup>2</sup> land; **Chicken** 2-6 CO<sub>2</sub> and 5-8 m<sup>2</sup> land; **Quorn** 2-6 CO<sub>2</sub> and 1-3 m<sup>2</sup> land; **Soya** 1-2 CO<sub>2</sub> and 2-3 m<sup>2</sup> land.

**References:** 1 Natasha Gilbert, 2012, One-third of our greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture, Nature 2 WWF, The Hidden World of Soy 3 Data compiled from Durk Nijdam Trudy Rood, Henk Westhoek, The price of protein: Review of land use and carbon footprints from life cycle assessments of animal food products and their substitutes, Food Policy 37 (2012) 760-770; and also from some of the studies it mentions 4 Érica Castanheira & Fausto Freire, 2013, Life-cycle greenhouse gas assessment of soybeans

### USING THE TABLE

Ethicscore: the higher the score, the better the company across the criticism categories.

● = worst rating,  
○ = middle rating,  
empty = best rating  
(no criticisms).

### USING THE TABLES

Positive ratings (+ve):

● Company Ethos:

★ = full mark,  
☆ = half mark.

● Product Sustainability:  
Maximum of five positive marks.

BRAND	Ethicscore (out of 20)	Environment					Animals			People				Politics				+ve		COMPANY GROUP
		Environmental Reporting	Nuclear Power	Climate Change	Pollution & Toxics	Habitats & Resources	Animal Testing	Factory Farming	Animal Rights	Human Rights	Workers' Rights	Supply Chain Management	Irresponsible Marketing	Arms & Military Supply	Genetic Engineering	Boycott Call	Political Activity	Anti-Social Finance	Company Ethos	
Dragonfly [V, O]	15.5										●							★	1.5	Dragonfly Group
Veggies [V]	15.5										●							★	1.5	Veggies
Taifun [V, O]	14.5	●									●							★	1.5	Life Foods GmbH
Fry's [V]	13.5			○		○			○		●							★	1	Fry Group Foods
Goodlife [V]	13.5							○			●								1	Goodlife Foods
VegiDeli [V]	13.5			○		○			○		●							★	1	VBites Foods
Goodlife	12.5							○			●									Goodlife Foods
Wicken Fen [V]	12.5							○			●			○					0.5	Weeks Foods
Wicken Fen	12							○			●			○						Weeks Foods
Granovita	9	●					●	●			●			○			○			Dr A Stoffel Holding AG
Quorn [V]	8	●		○		○	●	●	●		●			○					0.5	Monde Nissin
Cauldron	7.5	●		○		○	●	●	●		●			○						Monde Nissin
Quorn	7.5	●		○		○	●	●	●		●			○						Monde Nissin
Linda McCartney [V]	6	●		○	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	○				○	●		0.5	Hain Celestial
Linda McCartney	5.5	●		○	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	○				○	●			Hain Celestial
M&S	5			●	○	○	○	●	●	●		○		○		○	●			M&S Group plc
Waitrose [V]	5	○		○	●	●	○	●	●	●	○	●		○			○	☆	0.5	John Lewis Parntership
Aldi	4.5	○		○	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	●		○						Aldi
Sainsbury's [V]	4.5	○		●	●		○	●	●	○	●	○	●		○		●	●	1	J Sainsbury plc
Waitrose	4.5	○		○	●	●	○	●	●	●	○	●		○			○	☆		John Lewis Partnership
Sainsbury's	3.5	○		●	●		○	●	●	○	●	○	●		○		●	●		J Sainsbury plc
Tesco	2.5	○		●	●	●	○	●	●	●		●		○		●	●			Tesco plc
Lidl [V]	2	●		●	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	○		○	●	○	●		0.5	Schwarz Gruppe
Morrisons [V]	2	○		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		○	○		●		0.5	Wm Morrison plc
Lidl	1.5	●		●	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	○		○	●	○	●			Schwarz Gruppe
Morrisons	1.5	○		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		○	○		●			Wm Morrison plc
Asda [V]	1	○		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	○		●	●		0.5	Walmart
Tivall	1	○		○	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			Nestle
Asda	0.5	○		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	○		●	●			Walmart

[O] = organic [V] = vegan varieties See all the research behind these ratings on [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org). Free to subscribers.

## Veggie and vegan companies

**Vegan companies:** Veggies, Dragonfly, VBites (VegiDeli), Life Foods (Taifun) and Fry's.

**Vegetarian companies:** Goodlife and Weeks Foods (Wicken Fen).

**The other companies:** Hain Celestial (Linda McCartney's), Nestle (Tivall), Dr A. Stoffel Holding AG (Granovita), Monde Nissin (Quorn and Cauldron), and all the supermarkets, sell meat in addition to vegetarian and/or vegan options.

We only included the supermarkets that do their own brand veggie burgers or sausages. (Co-op does not).

## The ratings

Many of the companies on the table are small in terms of turnover. This means Ethical Consumer does not require them to have the type of well-developed environmental and supply-chain policies that we would expect of larger companies. They are also too small to do much tax avoidance, to be big political donors, or to pay their directors obscene sums of money.

The big companies did not all fare so well, being marked down for, amongst other things:

- **Likely use of tax avoidance strategies:** Hain Celestial (Linda McCartney), Dr A Stoffel Holding (Granovita) & Nestle (Tivall)
- **Excessive directors pay:** Hain Celestial & Nestle
- **Political Donations:** Hain Celestial (US Democrats) & Nestle (US Democrats and Republicans)

## The companies behind the brands

**Veggies** is an explicitly political, vegan workers coop based in Nottingham. It has been going since 1984, providing vegan catering at events and supporting campaigns for human and animal rights and environmental protection. It also sells radical books, ecological cleaning supplies, vegan multivitamins and Zapatista coffee. Its food is organic and GM free, and its soya is sourced from Europe. Its ready-made sausages are available from the Lembas wholesalers ([www.lembas.co.uk](http://www.lembas.co.uk)) who also distribute to wholefood shops within a 90 mile radius of Sheffield.

**Dragonfly Foods** is a small vegan company based in Devon which makes exclusively organic, non-GM tofu products.

**Taifun** is owned by **Life Foods**, a German company which makes exclusively vegan, organic and non-GM tofu and tofu-based products. Its products contain no palm oil, and are made from ecologically grown European soya.

**VBites** foods used to be called Redwood. It makes the **Cheatin**, **VegiDeli** and **Making Waves** lines of meat alternatives. We couldn't get information on its soya sourcing and it does use some uncertified palm oil. It also makes vegan cheese alternatives and vegan desserts.

**Fry's** is a South African family company that produces vegan and GM-free food. It lost some marks for using uncertified palm oil, and we couldn't get information on its soya sourcing. However, it also runs the Fry's Family Foundation that promotes vegetarianism throughout the world.

**Hain Celestial** produces the **Linda McCartney** and **Tilda Rice** brands (see the rice guide on page 16). All Linda McCartney sausages and its plain burgers and 1/4 lb burgers are vegan.

Hain Celestial is a large American company that also produces a range of other food and healthcare products.

It doesn't do very well in our ratings. It is registered in Delaware, a tax haven, it uses some uncertified palm oil, and it has directors that earn over £1 million. We couldn't get information on its soya sourcing.

Hain Celestial has just agreed a \$7.5 million settlement to end an American class action lawsuit over it having allegedly falsely labelled products as organic. (Not its meat alternatives).<sup>1</sup>

**Quorn** and **Cauldron**, the two main meat-free brands that you see in supermarkets, are both now owned by **Monde Nissin**, a Philippine company that largely makes packet noodles. Quorn was launched in the mid-eighties; a joint enterprise of the food company Rank Hovis McDougall and the chemical company ICI.

Probably because of the nationality, it was quite hard to get much information on Monde Nissin. It doesn't appear to have subsidiaries in tax havens, but neither could we find much by way of ethical policies – at least for the company as a whole. However, Cauldron's soya is from Canada, China and Europe, and is organic and non-GM.

**Tivall** is owned by **OSEM**, an Israeli company that is in turn owned by **Nestle**. It comes out very badly in our ratings. This is because Nestle has been widely criticised in a number of areas and is subject to a boycott call for its actions regarding baby milk marketing.

Nestle is also a member of many free trade lobby groups and in the 2014 election cycle it gave \$77,550 in political donations to US political candidates, with about two thirds of it going to Republicans. It also spent over \$2 million on political lobbying.<sup>2</sup>

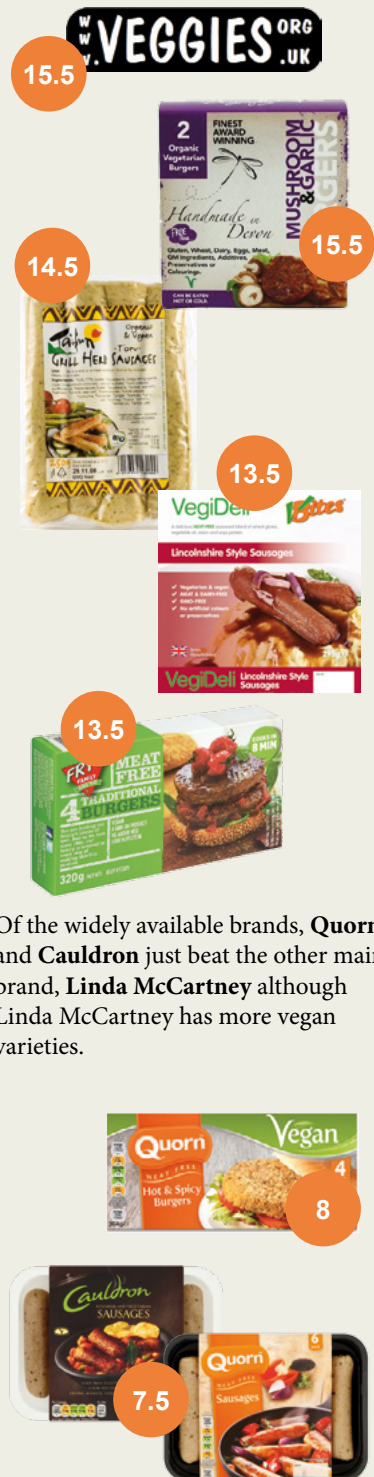


**References:** 1 Newsday, 23/9/2015, Hain Celestial settles mislabelling lawsuit for nearly \$10 million 2 [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)



All of our best buys are vegan companies with explicit environmental agendas, and for this reason they score highly in our rating system.

Our Best Buys are **Veggies**, **Dragonfly**, **Taifun**, **VegiDeli** and **Fry's**.



Of the widely available brands, **Quorn** and **Cauldron** just beat the other main brand, **Linda McCartney** although Linda McCartney has more vegan varieties.

# Soya's role in the deforestation of South America

Alongside logging and cattle ranching, soya production has a history of being linked to South American deforestation, particularly in Brazil, which is one of the biggest exporting countries.

This absolutely does not mean that vegetarians eating tofu have ever been a leading cause of deforestation in the Amazon. Most of the world's soya is fed to animals; only 6% of it is eaten directly by people.

Yet it is still sensible to be concerned about where the soya in your veggie burger comes from.

If it is grown well, soya should be an environmentalist's best friend. It produces more protein per land area than any other major crop. It grows particularly well in tropical climates, which is why so much is grown in South America, but Brazil has enough former pasture or abandoned land to double the amount of farmland without harming a single leaf on a single tree.<sup>1</sup> The issue is making sure that this happens.

## Brazil's success story

There is good news, as Brazil has managed to vastly reduce deforestation over the past decade. The rate at which the Amazon is being cut down is now 70% lower than it was ten years ago. As a result, it has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions more than any other country on earth.<sup>2</sup>

Most analysts put this achievement down to a political shift within Brazil. A big part of the story is the moderately left wing government that has been in power since 2003. It has made some effort to tackle deforestation: expanding protected areas, shutting down illegal logging operations, and throwing those responsible in jail. Another part is that the soya and beef industries have both agreed to moratoriums on the buying of produce grown on deforested land – more on that below.<sup>3</sup>

However, there is also bad news. In spite of this success, the Amazon is still being lost at about 6000 km<sup>2</sup> a year – an area about the size of Norfolk. Furthermore, the rate of deforestation has started rising again in the last couple of years. And some of the things that have contributed to the reduction in deforestation are now under threat.



Seven-foot-tall Greenpeace chickens invade McDonald's outlets after a report revealed the chickens used in their products were fed on soya that comes from the Amazon.

## The Brazilian Soy Moratorium

The Brazilian Soy Moratorium was established in 2006, after a huge global campaign by Greenpeace. Two huge industry groups agreed that none of their members would buy any soya grown on recently deforested land. And this was a massive deal as these groups – representing traders like Cargill, ADM (Pura and Crisp 'n' Dry brands in cooking oil guide, page 30) and Bunge – control 90% of the Brazilian soya market.

The moratorium was initially a short-term agreement, but it has now been renewed eight times. Farms violating it are identified using satellite data from the Brazilian Space Agency.

The moratorium has been an incredible success, which is especially impressive given that the price of soya has been high over the period. One recent academic study found:

"Between 2001 and 2006, prior to the moratorium, soybean fields in the Brazilian Amazon expanded by 1 million hectares, contributing to record deforestation rates. By 2014, after eight years of the moratorium, almost no additional forest was cleared to grow new soy."<sup>4</sup>

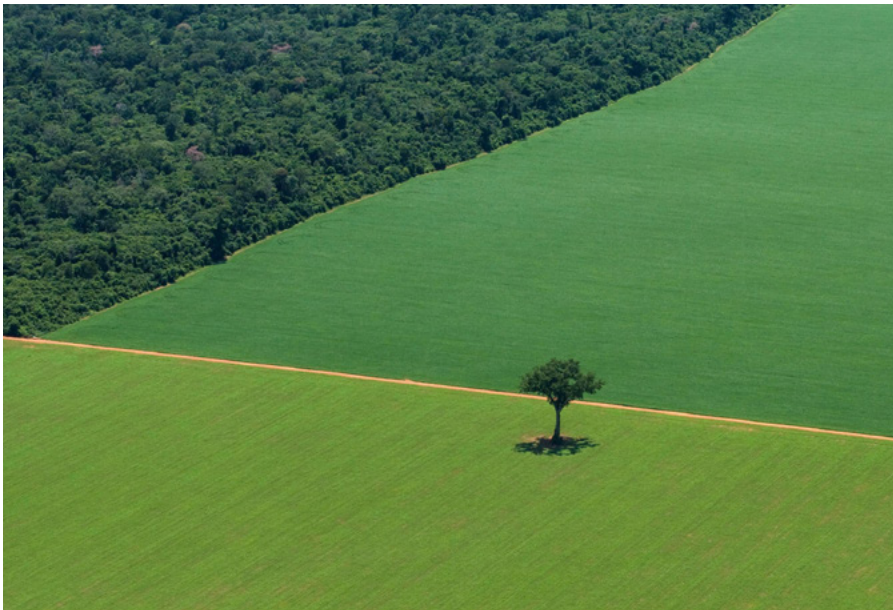
Inevitably, there are some problems. One problem is that the moratorium only covers the Brazilian Amazon, and deforestation for soya has continued in other places such as Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil's Cerrado forests.

But the biggest problem with the moratorium is that it is currently set to end in May 2016. Sadly, there appears to be consensus that the deal will end but the reasons for this remain opaque to us.

## Soy certification schemes

As well as the moratorium, there are two main certification schemes that are active in South American soya: The Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) and ProTerra. They both started about the same time as the moratorium. A decade on, their most glaring feature is how much less successful they have been than the moratorium.

The schemes both demand that soya meets basic environmental and labour standards. The ProTerra scheme differs in that the soya must be non-GM, and also, when you buy a bit of ProTerra certified soya, it is guaranteed to be the same bit that received the certification. The Roundtable allows some certification



A Brazil nut tree stands alone in a soya field planted on deforested land.

credits to be bought and sold separately from the soya that earned them.

So far, engagement with these schemes has been pretty limp. Only 0.5% of soya from Brazil is RTRS certified, and half the credits that have been issued have not been sold, due to a lack of buyers. A slightly larger amount is ProTerra certified, but not much.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that this lack of interest may have been partly due to the success of the moratorium.

Many groups such as Friends of the Earth have criticised the Roundtable for having lax standards, pointing out, for example, that the criteria contain loose ideas like “native forest” that are easily open to abuse.<sup>6</sup>

## What happens now?

Things have definitely improved in the last decade. But there are still major problems.

Firstly, there is something that none of these schemes address, which is soya's indirect impact – widely believed to be a factor in the remaining Amazon destruction. It works like this: cattle ranchers sell their land to soya farmers, pocket the money and move into the forest themselves. The soya comes up smelling of roses because it is not being grown on ‘recently deforested land’. It has displaced its guilt onto the cattle. While there is also a beef moratorium in Brazil, it is not yet clear whether it is working as well as the soya one.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, as stated above the soya moratorium seems about to reach the end of its life, and then it is pretty unclear what will happen next.

The theory is that the Brazilian government will take over forest protection. Over the past few years it has built a national land registry to clarify who owns what, and companies are saying that this should give it sufficient agency to enforce its own land use policies as it sees fit.

But there are several problems here, one of which is that the law is too weak. Since 1965 the Brazilian ‘Forest Code’ has officially protected Brazil's forests; stipulating protected areas and demanding that landowners conserve native forest on a certain proportion of their land, ranging from 80% in the Amazon, to 20% in other areas. While that is something, it still allows for quite a bit of deforestation. Furthermore, the law was weakened in 2012 after a big political fight, which does not bode well.

Another problem is that, even with the land registry, it remains to be seen how well the government will enforce the law.

Recent research found farmers five times more likely to violate the Forest Code than the soya moratorium.<sup>8</sup>



A Greenpeace protest against Cargill's illegal soya port in the Amazon rainforest and the deforestation caused by the expansion of soya.

## What can consumers do?

For those who want to avoid South American soya, Veggies, Cauldron and Taifun all say that their soya is not sourced from the region. Veggies' and Taifun's comes exclusively from Europe, while Cauldron's comes from Europe, China and Canada.

If you want to avoid soya altogether, Goodlife burgers and sausages are made from other beans, vegetables and nuts, as are Waitrose's. And Quorn is made from mycoprotein.

We couldn't get details of where the other companies source their soya.

The Soya Moratorium is supported by the European Soy Customer Group, whose members include Waitrose, M&S, Tesco, Co-op, Sainsbury's, Nestle and ASDA. They should be commended on being part of such a successful initiative.

In terms of the purchase of RTRS credits, the World Wildlife Fund describe M&S, Waitrose, Sainsbury's and Tesco as leaders.<sup>9</sup> M&S has committed to buying the most out of any UK shop, although this is still only enough to cover, in its own words “the soy used in all M&S Oakham chicken products”.

There is a lack of organised campaigns in this area at the moment, probably because the problem looked sufficiently like it was solved so that everyone turned their attention onto palm oil instead. However, the Soya Moratorium has shown the power that companies really have to do things in this area, and the power that the public have to force them into it. So if it all starts to unravel in the next few years, it will be worth focusing as much pressure on them as we can.

**References:** 1 France-Presse, 17 Sep 2013, Soybean farming blamed for increased deforestation in Brazilian Amazon 2 Howard, June 5, 2014, Brazil Leads World in Reducing Carbon Emissions by Slashing Deforestation 3 Boucher, 2014, How Brazil Has Dramatically Reduced Tropical Deforestation 4 Gibbs et al, 2015, Brazil's Soy Moratorium, Science 347, 6220 5 Meijer, 2015, A comparative analysis of the effectiveness of four supply chain initiatives to reduce deforestation, Tropical Conservation Science, Vol. 8 (2): 583 6 Friends of the Earth et al, 2011, Certified responsible? Critical assessment of the Round Table on Responsible Soy 7 Karen S. Meijer, op cit. 8 Gibbs et al, op cit. 9 WWF, 2014, Soya Report Card

# Hope in hops

*It may feel like the mainstream brewers have us over a barrel but the smaller independents are on the rise. Joanna Long explains how to find (or create!) an ethical brew.*

Our beer and lager score table is split in two: one half for the mainstream companies and one for smaller, vegan breweries that produce mostly organic ales. The big issues weighing on your pint are water consumption, isinglass and GM. Fortunately, with the rise of small co-operative and community breweries, it has never been easier to find a pint with a clear conscience.

## Water footprint

The basic components of beer are barley, yeast and water. Factoring the water footprint of barley (1,420 litres/kg) plus the water used in brewing, we find that it takes around 298 litres of water to make one litre of beer, roughly 169 litres per pint. This is an optimistic figure as it excludes the water footprint of other ingredients involved in manufacturing beer, including hops.<sup>1</sup>

Water consumption, and how to reduce it, is on the agenda for most of the big brewers, some of which have set ambitious

targets for reducing the hectolitres of water used to manufacture each hectolitre of beer (hl/hl):

- AB InBev: 3.2 hl/hl by 2017
- Heineken: 3.5 hl/hl by 2020
- Molson Coors: 2.8 hl/hl by 2025
- Carlsberg: 1.7hl/hl by 2030

## Carbon footprint

### Transport

Transporting all of these hectolitres raises the question of beer's carbon footprint. Marston's website states that its distribution fleet covered 6.4 million miles in 2016 ("the equivalent of travelling around the earth over 300 times"), generating 9,487 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the process.<sup>2</sup> Molson Coors, which brews and distributes over a third of the UK's beer,<sup>3</sup> produced direct emissions of 39,197 metric tonnes from its UK operations.<sup>4</sup> That would almost get you to Venus!

The Society of Independent Brewers puts the impact of the UK's alcohol production and consumption (which is mostly beer) at around 1.5% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions<sup>5</sup> and efforts by the big brewers to address this environmental impact are limited. Only AB InBev, Molson Coors and Heineken had at least two future quantified targets regarding environmental performance. The others had just one or, more often, none at all.

The growing popularity of American craft beer isn't helping the situation. According to figures released earlier this year by the Brewers Association, the UK imported over 460,000 barrels of US craft beer in 2016. That was over 10% of all US craft beer exports, second only to Canada (54.8%).<sup>6</sup>



### Packaging

One of the most comprehensive studies into the carbon footprint of beer, carried out in 2008 by Climate Conservancy, found that glass accounted for a fifth (21%) of the lifecycle carbon emissions of a 6-pack of ale, well ahead of distribution (8.4%).<sup>7</sup> In his 2010 book *How Bad Are Bananas?*, Mike Berners-Lee estimated that the footprint of a pint of locally brewed cask ale was 300g CO<sub>2</sub>e, with 3% of that consumed by packaging, contrasted with 900g CO<sub>2</sub>e for a mainstream bottled beer.

Berners-Lee didn't give a breakdown of the mainstream beer's carbon footprint and, of course, any figures vary between breweries, but the question of packaging remains.

Aluminium is lighter than glass, which reduces transportation costs, and recycling it consumes only 8% of the energy that would have been used to make a new can.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the original manufacture of aluminium involves mining bauxite and also the rates of recycling aluminium the UK are only 41%.<sup>9</sup> Although heavier, glass can be endlessly recycled with no degradation of quality and UK rates of recycling are high: over 67%.<sup>9</sup> Glass can also be reused without leaching chemicals.

If you're having a party, you might want to consider ordering a polypin from your local brewery. These are plastic versions of the normal 20 litre 'pin' cask and are available in various, more portable, sizes. Although unlikely to be recyclable, polypins are re-usable.



## Why isn't all beer vegan?

You may have assumed, not unreasonably, that a drink made of hops, yeast and water was already vegan, but the issue lies in the process of removing the yeast haze from beer after fermentation.

This process is called 'fining' and often employs isinglass, a substance derived from the dried swim bladders of fish. Isinglass is rich in collagen, which binds to yeast cells in the beer and settles at the bottom of the cask.<sup>10</sup> This settling process happens without isinglass, just more slowly: it can take 48-72 hours for an unfinned beer to settle, compared with less than 24 for finned beer.

### Why is vegan draught beer less common?

These vastly different rates of settling tend to be the reason why vegan draught beer is less common than bottled beer (the exception being Guinness, which has gone vegan in draught form first). Because unfinned casks need longer to settle, a pub would need a lot of storage space to keep the taps flowing with vegan beer as each barrel needs to be in situ for longer before serving.

### So, am I drinking fish guts?

Very little isinglass remains in the beer that is eventually drunk, but many find the use of the substance at all in the production process unacceptable. People could just drink slightly cloudy beer. This was the general way of things in 'ye olde' times, when beer was drunk from a shared, earthenware bowl. But with the advent of the glass (and basic hygiene) came the question 'what's that floating in my beer?' The growth of the craft beer and home brew movements have brought with them a greater market for unadulterated ales and a greater tolerance of cloudy beer, all of which could be good news for vegetarians and vegans.

On our score table, breweries certified by the Vegan Society as producing only vegan beer received a positive Company Ethos mark. Those with some certified vegan products received a full product sustainability mark, while those marketing their products as vegan but not

officially certified received half a product sustainability mark.

Of the major bigger brands, only BrewDog and Guinness (draught) are suitable for vegans. These are labelled [Vg] on the table.

## Genetic modification

*Although the EU prohibits the use of GM ingredients in products sold in Europe, genetic modification remains an issue among mainstream brewers who operate in markets around the world. Researchers from Carlsberg's in-house laboratory have been involved in the sequencing of the barley genome.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, AB InBev's Global Barley Research Team develops "new malt barley varieties that increase growers' productivity" in the name of water efficiency, pest resistance and "climate resilience."<sup>12</sup> These two companies therefore lost a whole mark on the table under Controversial Technologies.*

Even those not directly involved in genetic engineering may have GM ingredients in their supply chains. Molson Coors' GM policy, for example, states that in areas of the world where GMO food products are approved for use and widely available, such as North America, Molson Coors' suppliers "cannot guarantee that the corn (maize) products that we also use in brewing are GMO free."<sup>13</sup> Molson Coors and others with no company-wide GM-free policy lost half a mark under Controversial Technologies.

## Table highlights

Of the mainstream companies, BrewDog, Molson Coors and Asahi Group were the only companies to achieve an Ethical Consumer score of 10 or more. Their position at the top of the table has less to do with virtuous behaviour on their part and more to do with the political activities

and disrespect for human rights shown by other companies. Carlsberg, Heineken, AB InBev and Diageo, for example, each had eight or more subsidiaries in oppressive regimes and therefore lost whole marks under Human Rights. Carlsberg was in last place, with operations in ten oppressive regimes: Belarus, China, India, Kazakhstan, Laos, Myanmar, Russia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.<sup>14</sup>

In 2016, AB InBev spent the most on gaining political influence in the United States with a total of \$620,084, going to both Republican and Democratic parties, and \$3.8 million spent lobbying on bills relating to the brewing sector.<sup>15</sup> Along with Carlsberg and Heineken, AB InBev was also a member of the World Economic Forum, an international corporate lobby group which exerts undue corporate influence on policy-makers in favour of market solutions that are potentially detrimental to the environment and human rights.<sup>16</sup> Heineken and Diageo were also members of several other corporate lobby groups, including the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the European Roundtable of Industrialists and the American Chamber of Commerce.<sup>16</sup> All of these companies lost a mark under Political Activities.

On the bright side, AB InBev received our best rating for environmental reporting. It was the only major brewer to do so though.

Marston's, Fuller, Smith and Turner, and Greene King all run pubs around the UK that serve food and were rated under our Animal Rights category for serving meat not labelled as organic or free range, and under our Palm Oil category as this ingredient is prevalent in the catering industry.

With a few exceptions, all the companies in our guide have more brands than we can comfortably fit on our table. A full list of who owns what is below.

### Who makes what?

AB InBev	Budweiser, Bass, Boddingtons, Brahma
AB InBev/Molson Coors	Beck's, Corona Extra, Hoegaarden, Leffe, Pilsner Urquell, Stella Artois
Carlsberg	Carlsberg, Holsten Pils, San Miguel, Special Brew, Tetley's, Brooklyn, Beerlao, Tuborg, Warsteiner
Diageo	Guinness, Harp, Tusker
Greene King	Greene King IPA, Old Speckled Hen, Abbot Ale, Belhaven
Heineken	Heineken, Amstel, Foster's, John Smith's, Murphy's Stout, Kronenbourg 1664 (brewing)
Marston's	Marston's, Lancaster Bomber, Thwaites, Wainwright
Molson Coors	Carling, Coors, Cobra, Staropramen, Miller
Molson Coors/Asahi Group	Grolsch, Peroni Nastro Azzuro

### USING THE TABLES

Ethicscore: the higher the score, the better the company across the criticism categories.

- = worst rating,
- = middle rating,
- empty = best rating (no criticisms).

### USING THE TABLES

Positive ratings (+ve):

- Company Ethos:
- ★ = full mark,
- ☆ = half mark.
- Product Sustainability: Maximum of five positive marks.

MAINSTREAM BRANDS	Ethiscore (out of 20)	Environment					Animals		People				Politics			+ve		COMPANY GROUP			
		Environmental Reporting	Climate Change	Pollution & Toxics	Habitats & Resources	Palm Oil	Animal Testing	Factory Farming	Animal Rights	Human Rights	Workers' Rights	Supply Chain Management	Irresponsible Marketing	Arms & Military Supply	Controversial Technologies	Boycott Call	Political Activity		Anti-Social Finance	Company Ethos	Product Sustainability
BrewDog [Vg] *	12	●									●	○		○						1	TSG Consumer Partners
Asahi	10.5	●									●			○				●		Asahi Group	
CELIA Organic [Vg, O]	10	●							●		●			●		○	●			1.5	Carlsberg A/S
Grolsch, Peroni	10	●									●			○		○	●			Molson Coors, Asahi Group	
Amstel, Foster's, Heineken	8.5	○			○				●		○	○		○		●	●			Heineken Hldg, L'Arch Green	
Carling, Cobra, Staropramen	8.5	○		○	○						●	○		○		●	●			Molson Coors	
Carlsberg, Tetley, Warsteiner	8.5	●							●		●			●		○	●			Carlsberg A/S	
Fuller's Honey Dew [O]	8.5	●				●		●	●		○	●		○			○			1	Fuller, Smith & Turner, AAM
Budweiser, Bass, Boddingtons	8				○				●		●	○		●		●	●			AB InBev	
Beck's, Corona, Stella Artois	8	○			○					○		●	○		●		●	●		Molson Coors, AB InBev	
Lancaster Bomber, Marston's	8	●				●		●	●		○	○		○				○		Marston's plc	
Fuller's	7.5	●				●		●	●		○	●		○			○			Fuller, Smith & Turner, AAM	
Greene King, Abbot Ale	6	●				●		●	●		○	●	●	○			●			Greene King plc	
Guinness Draught [Vg]	5.5	○	○	○	○			●	●	●	●	○		○		●	●			0.5	Diageo plc
Guinness, Harp, Tusker	5	○	○	○	○			●	●	●	●	○		○		●	●			Diageo plc	
SMALLER VEGAN BREWERS																					
Little Valley Ginger Pale [O,F,Vg]	18																	★	3	Little Valley Brewery	
Little Valley [O, Vg]	17																	★	2	Little Valley Brewery	
Atlantic [O, Vg]	16.5																	★	1.5	Atlantic Brewery	
Pitfield [O, Vg]	16.5																	★	1.5	London Beer Co, Dominion	
Liverpool Organic [O]	16																	★	1	Liverpool Organic Brewery	
Marble [Vg]	14.5											●						★	0.5	Marble Beers Limited	
Stroud Brewery [O, Vg]	14.5											●								1.5	Stroud Brewery
Samuel Smith's Org [O, Vg]	14	●										●								2	Samuel Smith Old Brewery
Samuel Smith's [Vg]	13	●										●								1	Samuel Smith Old Brewery
Batemans [Vg]	12.5	●										●								0.5	George Bateman & Son Ltd

See all the research behind these ratings on [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org). For definitions of all the categories go to [www.ethicalconsumer.org/subscriberarea](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/subscriberarea)

\* = except Jet Black Heart (contains milk) and Dogma, Electric India (contain honey) Vg = vegan

## The smaller breweries

The explosion of small breweries in recent years has made it impossible to include them all. So we decided to focus on breweries producing vegan and/or organic beer. We've also tried to have a spread of companies from across the UK so that you can buy locally as much as possible, although many of the beers are also available online.

Transparency isn't the strong suit of these small breweries – none had environmental reports or supply chain policies – but most were spared a worst rating by virtue of being small (turnover

below £10.2 million) and having their entire product range certified organic (which contains some protections for workers' rights). On the other hand, the majority of the small breweries received positive Company Ethos marks for having entirely vegan or organic ranges, as well as sustainability marks for vegan and organic products.

### Organic and Fairtrade

Organic ale is relatively easy to get hold of from the smaller breweries, while the big players have been slower to cotton on. Organic products are labelled [O] on the table. Breweries that are certified as wholly

organic by the Soil Association received a positive Company Ethos mark.

Little Valley is the only brewery in the UK to do a Fairtrade beer, the Ginger Pale Ale, which is labelled [F] on the table.



## The companies behind the brands

**AB InBev** are by far the biggest player in beer and lager, with 31% of the £1.2 billion market. Although the company has lots of brands, many are brewed under license by other companies, such as Molson Coors. In October 2016, AB InBev took over SABMiller in a \$12 billion deal. The company's annual report boasted that this expanded AB InBev, with "operations in virtually every major beer market". The company sold its stake in the subsidiary MillerCoors to Molson Coors.

**Molson Coors'** core brands (Carling, Coors) account for around 11% of the beer market but when you factor in its brewing licences (Stella, Peroni, Corona, Beck's) that figure rises to over 31%, meaning that Molson Coors' ethics have a big impact on consumer choices. The outlook isn't great: the company didn't appear to have a good understanding of its environmental impacts (their report didn't mention distribution),<sup>17</sup> and its supply chain management policies and procedures were threadbare (weak clauses on child labour, forced labour, working hours and living wages, and no clear auditing schedule).<sup>18</sup> Add to that political donations totalling \$512,188 in 2016 in the USA,<sup>15</sup> high-risk subsidiaries in Delaware and Luxembourg,<sup>19</sup> and a leaky policy on genetically modified organisms,<sup>20</sup> and you start to think they did well to score 8.5.

By way of contrast, another company with the same score stood out as a big player on a positive path. **Heineken**, which is partly owned by L'Arche Green (which in turn is 88% owned by the Heineken Family), would have received our best rating for environmental reporting if a crucial piece of its sustainable sourcing of raw materials data had been verified. The company had promised in its report that verified data would be published online by the end of March 2017 but this had not happened at the time of our research. Heineken could also have achieved a best rating for supply chain management if its Supplier Code was more detailed and if it had input from stakeholders (NGOs, trade unions, etc.) in its auditing process. Heineken has also published a tax policy stating that it does not use tax havens for tax avoidance purposes and that it supports efforts to introduce country-by-country reporting. Unfortunately, the company did not report any meaningful trading or investment data by country in its own annual report and it had multiple 'high risk' subsidiaries in jurisdictions

considered by Ethical Consumer to be tax havens.<sup>21</sup> The company therefore still scored a worst Ethical Consumer rating for likely use of tax avoidance strategies.

**Greene King** is the UK's biggest pub retailer and brewer. Its Old Speckled Hen and Abbot Ale brands accounted for just under 10% of ale sales in 2016. It also runs over 3,000 pubs, restaurants and hotels all over the country. Like its competitors Marston's and Fuller's, Greene King cares little for ethics or corporate social responsibility, with worst ratings for Environmental Reporting, Palm Oil, Factory Farming, Animal Rights, Supply Chain Management and Anti-Social Finance. The company was in trouble with the Advertising Standards Authority earlier this year after a promotional flyer for one of its pubs was placed in the book bags of local schoolchildren. The company said that they did not consider the leaflet to be an alcoholic promotion but the ASA disagreed. They consequently lost a whole mark on our table for Irresponsible Marketing.<sup>22</sup>

Greene King also lost half a mark under Workers' Rights for its failure to commit to paying its staff a living wage and for actively campaigning against the national living wage. The National Living Wage, introduced in April 2016, requires that workers over 25 must be paid at least £7.50/hour. Workers younger than 25 may be paid less, down to as little as £3.50/hour for apprentices. The rate set by the Living Wage Foundation says that the minimum should be £8.45 (£9.75 in London). According to a 2014 report by the Living Wage Commission, bar staff, waiting staff, and kitchen and catering assistants were found to be the top three occupations in the UK with the highest proportion of people paid below the living wage. Yet a news piece on Greene King's website trumpeted the company's membership of the British Hospitality Association (BHA), whose Chief Executive stated that the BHA was "lobbying to help alleviate the huge impact of the National Living Wage on this [hospitality] industry" and welcomed Greene King's "perspective and leadership."<sup>23</sup>

**Stroud Brewery**, just south of Gloucester, is a local institution. Established in 2006 using community loans, the brewery also makes an ale using hops grown in its customers' gardens (see community brewing on page 23).

**Atlantic Brewery** is a three-person outfit based near Newquay in Cornwall. The



Best buys are the smaller, vegan brewers which received our best rating for Supply Chain Management:

**Little Valley, Pitfield's, Atlantic, Liverpool Organic.**



### RECOMMENDED

We also recommend the other brands in our vegan beers table: **Samuel Smith, Batemans, Marble Brewery, Stroud Brewery.**

Of the mainstream brands **BrewDog** is our recommended buy.

brewery grows its own hops, as well as any additional botanicals, and has been certified organic by the Soil Association since its inception. They export to France by sailboat.

**Little Valley Brewery** is based in Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire. It produces 100% certified vegan ales. Most of its ales are also certified organic by the Soil Association and, as mentioned above, it brews the UK's only Fairtrade certified ale.

**Pitfields and Liverpool Organic Brewery's** bottled beers are all organic and suitable for vegans.

## DIY alternatives

As ever, you can escape many of the dilemmas of emissions, packaging and genetic modification by joining the growing homebrew movement. Our homebrewer-in-residence, Richard Livings of the Fair Tax Mark, recommends that absolute beginners visit their local homebrew supplies shop for some friendly, face-to-face advice. There are also lots of online forums, shops and recipes, here are some starters:

- [www.art-of-brewing.co.uk](http://www.art-of-brewing.co.uk)
- [www.the-home-brew-shop.co.uk](http://www.the-home-brew-shop.co.uk)
- [www.brewstore.co.uk](http://www.brewstore.co.uk)
- [www.themaltmiller.co.uk](http://www.themaltmiller.co.uk)

## Community brewing

If you like beer and gardening but don't want to brew your own, there is a growing trend for community brewing.

Crystal Palace Transition Town ([www.crystalpalacetransition.org.uk/palace-pint](http://www.crystalpalacetransition.org.uk/palace-pint)) runs an initiative called The Palace Pint where locals grow hops in their gardens and then in autumn hand them all in for brewing by a micro-brewery in neighbouring Penge. The hops are a dwarf variety (Prima Donna), which grow to just 7-8ft and so are suitable for most gardens or patios. Growers can exchange tips and advice throughout the year on the Palace Pint Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/groups/197777587020602](https://www.facebook.com/groups/197777587020602)) and then get together for 'a bit of a do' once the beer is brewed!

The New Lion in Totnes ([www.newlionbrewery.co.uk](http://www.newlionbrewery.co.uk)) is currently building its own network of local hop growers and also creates 'collaborative' brews in partnership with local organisations. Its 'Circular Stout', for instance, was infused with oyster mushrooms grown by sustainable mushroom farmers, GroCycle, on coffee grounds, spent hops and grains. A 2014 Sweet Chestnut Ale was created using ingredients from the Agroforestry Research Trust. These creations don't always make it as far as a bottle, so if you're interested in a sip then you need to join.

Stroud Brewery, featured on our small breweries table, has an ale made using locally-grown hops: Brewers Garden. It started after the brewery's founder, Greg Pilley, brewed an ale using green hops grown next to the brewery. The result was so popular that customers offered to grow hops in their gardens and allotments to brew it again the following year. The



brewery now has a community of 40-50 local growers. Every year, in the second week in September, growers cut the plant whole and bring it to the brewery where they collectively pick the hops. The ale is usually brewed the same day, fermented for a week and then cask conditioned for a further week before being ready to drink. Growers get a complimentary 9-pint polypin, while the rest is bottled or distributed to pubs. The brew will probably be gone by the time you are reading this but if you're in the Stroud area and want to become part of the growing network, simply email [office@stroudbrewery.co.uk](mailto:office@stroudbrewery.co.uk) and they'll send you a plant.

You can also find or start a community brewing initiative near you via [transitionnetwork.org](http://transitionnetwork.org).

## Co-operative brewing

There are an increasing number of co-operative breweries around the UK. With the ongoing decline of local pubs and village breweries, communities have been coming together to save their favourite brews and beer houses. The poster-child of this movement is the Heskett Newmarket Brewery Co-operative in Cumbria, which was set up in 1999 to take over the local pub and brewery after the couple who were running them announced their plans to retire.



Delivery of hops for Stroud Brewery's 2016 batch of Brewers Garden.



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The local people who saved the Old Crown in Hesket Newmarket from closure. It is now co-operatively owned by them.

Jim and Liz Fearnley ran the Old Crown pub in Hesket Newmarket and, in 1988, started a brewery in a converted barn out the back. The beers they brewed were exclusively for the Old Crown, which soon became a place of pilgrimage for real ale enthusiasts. Gradually, as the brewery's reputation spread, other pubs across Cumbria expressed interest in the beers and a small network of outlets was established. The Fearnleys sold the pub in 1995 to concentrate on the brewery and a few years later were looking to retire entirely.

The news of the village brewery's potential closure brought together a group of enthusiasts to work out how best to

ensure its survival. And, lo, the Hesket Newmarket Brewery Co-operative was born.

The co-op is a community enterprise through which real ale enthusiasts, who either live locally or have local connections, own equal shares in the brewery. Over the years, the number of shareholders has grown to around 100, with more on the waiting list.

The brewery still operates from its barn setting, although the original modified dairy tanks have been replaced by a new brewing plant capable of producing 50 barrels (nearly 15,000 pints) a week. A new temperature-controlled storage facility was later built alongside and opened in

2004 by none other than Prince Charles, who popped back a couple of years later to investigate some new bottling facilities.

The brewery maintains close ties with the Old Crown, which has also become a co-operative, each owning a share in the other.

If you're in Cumbria you can enjoy a pint of Hesket Newmarket at the Old Crown, of course, but also at a number of other pubs listed on the brewery's website, [www.hesketbrewery.co.uk](http://www.hesketbrewery.co.uk)

## Co-operative breweries around the UK

Biggar Brewing, Walney Island	Barrow-in-Furness	<a href="http://biggarbrewing.co.uk">biggarbrewing.co.uk</a>
Farmageddon Brewing Co-operative	Northern Ireland	<a href="http://www.farmageddonbrewery.com">www.farmageddonbrewery.com</a>
Boundary Brewing	Belfast	<a href="http://boundarybrewing.coop">boundarybrewing.coop</a>
Lacada Brewery	Northern Ireland	<a href="http://www.lacadabrewery.com">www.lacadabrewery.com</a>
Star Inn	Salford	<a href="http://www.staronthecorner.co.uk">www.staronthecorner.co.uk</a>
Pumphouse Community Brewery	North Essex/Suffolk	<a href="http://toppbrew.co.uk">toppbrew.co.uk</a>
Adur Brewery	Brighton	<a href="http://www.adurbrewery.co.uk">www.adurbrewery.co.uk</a>
Drone Valley Brewery	Derbyshire	<a href="http://dronevalleybrewery.com">dronevalleybrewery.com</a>
Topsham Ales	Devon	<a href="http://www.topsham-ales.co.uk">www.topsham-ales.co.uk</a>

## Useful links

There are a number of directories you can consult to find breweries doing things differently. Ethical Consumer found inconsistencies in some of them, so do check before you chug:

- **Vegan Society** [www.vegansociety.com](http://www.vegansociety.com) has a directory where you can search for breweries.
- **Barnivore** [www.barnivore.com](http://www.barnivore.com) is a directory of vegan-friendly beers, wines and spirits.
- **The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)** [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) maintains a list of partly or wholly organic breweries.
- Search for co-operative breweries in **Co-operatives UK's** directory [www.uk.coop/directory](http://www.uk.coop/directory)

**References:** 1 [waterfootprint.org](http://waterfootprint.org), visited 14 September 2017 2 [www.marstons.co.uk](http://www.marstons.co.uk), visited 14 September 2017 3 Beer – UK – December 2016, Mintel 4 Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP): Climate Change 2017 Information Request – Molson Coors Brewing Company 5 'How green is your beer?' [www.siba.org](http://www.siba.org), viewed 21 September 2017 6 'UK is now second-largest importer of US craft beer' [www.morningadvertiser.co.uk](http://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk), viewed 21 September 2017 7 The Carbon Footprint of Fat Tire® Amber Ale, 2008, Climate Conservancy 8 [www.recyclebank.com](http://www.recyclebank.com), visited 14 September 2017 9 Defra, UK Statistics on Waste, 15 December 2016 10 Brew Your Own [www.byo.com](http://www.byo.com), visited 14 September 2017 11 [www.carlsberggroup.com](http://www.carlsberggroup.com), visited 2 August 2017 12 AB InBev 2015 Global Citizenship Report 13 Molson Coors Brewing Company, GMO Policy 2013 14 Carlsberg Annual Report 2016 15 Open Secrets [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org), viewed 24 August 2017 16 [www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org) [www.wbcds.org](http://www.wbcds.org), [www.amchameu.eu](http://www.amchameu.eu), [www.ert.eu](http://www.ert.eu), member lists viewed April 2017 17 Our Beer Print 2017, Molson Coors Brewing Company 18 Molson Coors Brew Company Supplier Standards 2012 19 Molson Coors Brewing Company Annual Report 2017 20 Molson Coors Brewing Company GMO Policy 2013 21 Hoovers.com, viewed 23 August 2017 22 [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk), viewed 31 August 2017 23 [www.greeneking.co.uk](http://www.greeneking.co.uk), viewed 2 August 2017

# More guides that include vegan friendly brands and companies



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[www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/food/dairyfreeicecream](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/food/dairyfreeicecream)



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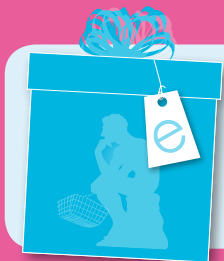
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